

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
INITIAL/FINAL POLLUTION REPORT**

**DATE:** 5/11/03

**SUBJECT:** Rankin-Patterson Oil Co. Spill

**FROM:** Benjamin Franco, OSC  
USEPA Region 4

**TO:** S. Hitchcock, EPA  
Region 4, RRC

**I. BACKGROUND**

SITE ID:	None
PROJECT CEILING:	None
LEAD AGENCY:	EPA, Region 4, ERRB 61 Forsyth Street, SW Atlanta, Georgia 30303
NPL:	No
FUNDING:	None
LEAD OSC:	Benjamin Franco

**II SITUATION**

Date of Notification:	10 May 2003
Date Action Started:	11 May 2003
Pollutant:	Diesel
Quantity Discharged:	2,900 gallons
Source Identification:	Rankin-Patterson Oil Co. Bulk Plant

**III ACTIONS TAKEN**

On May 10, 2003, 2215 hours telephone duty officer received a call from outposted OSC Fitzsimmons pertaining to an oil spill that occurred at the Rankin-Patterson Oil Co. facility in Asheville, NC. OSC Jardine contacted the Bucombe County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) in order to determine if the discharge was significant (warranting a federal presence). Bucombe County EMA had originally reported a release of 5900 gallons and that some oil had reached a creek behind the facility. An initial spill estimate of 5900 gallons was reported, but after a more careful reading of the tank it was discovered that only 2900 gallons was spilled. The local fire department and county hazmat team deployed absorbent booms on a creek (Sweeten Creek) that was located behind the facility. Sweeten Creek is fast moving and is less

than 6,000 feet from the French Broad River. Because of the spill size, an OSC was dispatched to assess the situation.

The cause of the spill was attributed to a bleeder valve that was left open by a fuel transfer and a non-working secondary containment system. On May 9, 2003, 1430 hours the Rankin-Patterson Oil Facility received a load of diesel. As part of the offloading procedures, a bleeder valve that is attached to a pump is opened when moving fuel from the truck into the storage tank. At the end of fuel loading, the truck operator is supposed to close the bleeder valve. The truck operator failed to do this and this caused diesel fuel to spill into the containment area. The secondary containment was not sealed properly and fuel went into a nearby creek. The spill was discovered in the afternoon of May 10, 2003 by someone that detected a heavy fuel smell. The trucking company (PTC) assumed responsibility for the spill and hired an environmental contractor (NEO) to perform recovery efforts. Recovery efforts began in the early morning hours of May 11, 2003. NEO deployed booms in several areas along the Sweeten Creek, and used a vac truck to recover product from the containment area and the creek. The North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDENR) had also responded to the spill and was monitoring the situation.

When OSC Franco arrived, NEO was still recovering product from inside and outside the containment area, and on the creek's bank. The OSC conducted an SPCC inspection of the facility and found several problems with the facility's plan. It was obvious that the containment walls were not working properly due to the amount of fuel recovered outside the system. The OSC suspects that the union between the wall and the concrete floor was not properly sealed. In addition, there are several areas in the containment wall that has pipes coming through them and improperly sealed. Basically, the secondary containment system needs to be looked at.

Pertaining to the response situation, NEO will continue recovering diesel/water mixture. The North Carolina Division of Water Quality will continue to monitor the situation and no further EPA involvement is needed for the moment. EPA will follow up with an enforcement action against the facility.

#### **IV FUTURE ACTIONS**

OSC has demobilized from the Site, but will continue to assist the State and Local agencies involved.

#### **V ESTIMATED COSTS**

EPA	\$ 500
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